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ABSTRACT

Drawing from political science, sociology, and communication literature, this paper provides a review of research dealing with political candidate image to show the various ways this concept has been treated by scholars. The paper begins with an examination of the rationales offered by researchers for the study of image, then addresses the components of candidate image, empirically derived concepts of the "ideal candidate," and comparative evaluations of candidate images. It next discusses extraneous concerns that might affect the "role" of an image within the context of an election. The paper concludes with a discussion of possible future directions for research in the area. Seventy-six references are provided. (FL)

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POLITICAL CANDIDATE IMAGE:

CONCEPTS AND CONCEPTUALIZATIONS

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Abstract

This paper provides a review of research dealing with political candidate image from political science, sociology, and communication literature. Among the specific areas discussed in this analysis are the components of political candidate image, ideal candidate conceptualizations, and the relative efficacy of campaign issues versus candidate image in affecting voting outcomes. In addition to the discussion of these topics, this paper offers recommendations for future research on candidate image.

POLITICAL CANDIDATE IMAGE: CONCEPTS AND CONCEPTUALIZATIONS

In his book, The Image, Boulding (1961) called for a new science of "eiconics," or the cross-disciplinary study of images. As the subtitle of his book suggests, the study of image is, indeed, the study of "knowledge in life and society," and as such, has commanded a great deal of scholarly attention from several disciplines within the social sciences.

One of the more concentrated focuses upon image has been within the realm of politics. Although the concept of political image has been part of our lexicon for decades (Nimmo, Mansfield, & Savage, 1974b, p. 1), only comparatively recently have researchers performed concerted research aimed at delineating the functions, dimensions, and accessibility of political images. Although researched by scholars in such fields as political science, sociology, and communication, this concentrated heuristic attention has, as yet, produced little agreement among scholars concerning the concept of the "image" in politics. Image is still considered "one of the most important but least understood facets of American politics" (Miller, Wattenberg, & Malanchuk, 1985, p. 183).

This paper attempts to put into perspective some of the previous research concerning political images. Our focus is upon a cross-section of the recent work addressing various aspects of "image." The focus of our examination concerns both empirical research and conceptual pieces from the fields of political science, sociology, and communication.

Our goal is to illustrate the progress of research into this area of inquiry, and to draw attention to some of the various, and in some instances contradictory, concepts advanced for image. In short, by reviewing the recent work in this area we seek to provide the reader with a perspective concerning how this illusive, yet important phenonmenon has been treated by scholars.

Because of space and time considerations we will not address literature concerning image cognition, or the role of mass media in image perception. This paper will begin with a conceptual rationale for the study of political image, that is, what reasons are offered justifying inquiry into the phenomenon. The next section addresses the components of candidate image, empirically derived concepts of the "ideal candidate," and comparative evaluations of candidate images. We then address extraneous concerns which may affect the "role" of an image within the context of an election. This section focuses upon the "issue versus image" literature. Finally, this paper will offer a discussion section indicating possible future directions for research.

Conceptual Rationale for Studying Image

For many researchers, the importance placed upon political

image finds its justification in the widely-held belief that images can and/or do affect final vote counts in popular elections. Several researchers have advanced the claim that the study of political images is important because of the potential held by images to determine voting behavior on the part of the American public.

Rose and Fuchs (1968) warned that one must "exercise great caution" in speculating about causal relationships between a communication pattern projecting a political image and voting behavior on the part of the electorate (p. 248). However, this very caveat suggests the possibility of a relationship between image and voting behavior. Others have not been so reticent in asserting such a relationship. For example, Stamn, Burgess, Jordan and Lim (1985) declared that a first rule of politics was that issues had "nothing to do with an election's outcome" (p. 4). What was important was the projected image. Whalen (1976) wrote that due to the "American penchant to vote image over issue image building [was] a process that may win votes" (p. 207). Brooks (1967) observed that a "speaker's ethos [was] a source of persuasive proof" and that candidate image was a "primary factor in persuasion" (p. 273), and Rarick, Duncan, Lee and Porter (1977) observed that a growing body of empirical research indicated that "voters' perceptions of candidates can significantly influence their voting behavior" (p. 260).

Other writers have observed that previous research has "noted the continuing relationship of candiate images to voting behavior" (Maddox, 1980, p. 210), and that students of voting

behavior have delineated how "voters' perceptions of candidates [have] influence[d] electoral decisions" (Nimmo, Mansfield, & Savage, 1974b, p. 1). Nimmo and Savage (1976) wrote that because voters responded to candidates on the basis of image, and that candidate image provided the "best single predictor of voting behavior," voter defection from partisan self-images was explained (p. 38).

Image researchers have portrayed the concept of image as at least a factor in determining the outcome of presidential elections (Brooks, 1967; Brummett, 1981; Campbell, 1979; DeLancey & Swanson, 1981; Kennamer & Chaffee, 1981; Maddox, 1980; Nimmo, Mansfield & Savage, 1974b; Pike, 1985; Rarick, Duncan, Lee & Porter, 1977; Zandpour, 1985), gubernatorial elections (Rose & Fuchs, 1968; Whalen, 1979), senate elections (Mandel, 1970), and at least one judicial race (Lesch & Korinek, 1985).

Besides election concerns, research has also applied the concept of image to other elements in the political arena. For example, Kaufer (1979) illustrated how the images of "ironist" and "hypocrite" were conveyed by Presidents Kennedy and Nixon, respectively. Kaufer argued that President Nixon's "image before the American people as a hypocritical power symbol" made inevitable his eventual removal from office (p. 22). Ross (1980) discussed trustworthiness, similarity, and attraction as components of credibility and illustrated how these were projected by Anwar el-Sadat in his address to the Israeli Parliament, and Krieghbaum (1976-77) examined President Carter's 1980 inauguration ceremony as a successful image-projecting machine.

In other words, justifications for studying political image can be grounded in examining the perceived relationship of the image concept to political outcomes. It has been argued that the interest in political image is a "natural by-product of decision making" (Waite, 1980, p. 1), and thus, a clearer conception of "image" and its role within politics may help to delineate those components that mark the difference between political success and failure. That realization has led some scholars and political observers to speculate that there may, indeed, be an "ideal prototype" against which all real candidates are measured (Brinkley, 1980; Miller, Wattenberg, & Malanchuk, 1985), and others to suggest that the "charisma factor" can be treated like a political tactic and employed to win elections.

But, by examining image we gain more than just a better handle on potential political success or failure. A clearer understanding of the role and components of image may also help to explain the very interworkings of politics within a democratic form of government. The next section of this paper will examine literature concerning the components of candidate image.

Components of Candidate Image

A variety of component conceptualizations of candidate image have emerged in the political science and communication literature over the past twenty years, primarily through the administration of scales to subjects and administration of emergent data to factor analytic techniques.

Using a student population as subjects, McCroskey (1966) isolated character and trustworthiness as the two components of public figure credibility. Berlo, Lemert, and Mertz (1969-70), using an adult population as subjects, found three dimensions of public figure credibility: safety, qualification, and dynamism. Kjeldahl, Carmichael, and Mertz (1971) identified two factors employed by students in evaluating presidential candidates, specifically, in the context of the 1968 Oregon primary: genuineness and leadership.

As part of a series of investigations designed to assess the applicability of source credibility scales across subject populations and target source types, McCroskey, Jensen, and Todd (1972) identified five dimensions of public figure credibility: competence, character, composure, extroversion, and sociability.

To determine the factors constituting the image of a presidential candidate, Kaid and Hirsch (1973) conducted a factor analysis on student responses to Senator Edmund Muskie. Two factors emerged, trustworthiness and demeanor.

In a study conducted by McCain and Rowand (1973), three factors of credibility emerged after subjects were exposed to televised speeches of two presidential candidates, Senator Edward Kennedy and Senator George McGovern: leadership, extroversion, and composure.

Through a series of telephone interviews with general public subjects, Andersen and Todd (1975) identified three dimensions of public figure homophily: attitude-belief homophily, background homophily, and personality homophily. In a subsequent augmentation to this study, through use of a student subject

population, Andersen and Todd de Mancillas (1978) isolated two dimensions of public figure homophily: attitude homophily and background homophily.

Wakshlag and Edison (1979) investigated the image of 15 public figures on the basis of responses to attraction, credibility, and perceived similarity scales and through concept-free paired comparisons. The concepts of competence, sociability, character, composure, extroversion, similarity, and physical attraction as components of the three constructs were found to be utilized in the comparison of the public figures; task and social attraction were not found to fit into this evaluation. On the basis of their results, the researchers concluded that the three constructs involved are part of a latent structure which becomes important when public figures act as communicators, but not as part of a general evaluation of these sources.

In addition to these source valence-focused communication studies of candidate image, two political science studies have generated useful dichotomies of political candidate perception which are germane. Siegel (1964) distinguishes between job-crucial candidate attributes (e.g., honesty, intelligence, and independence) and personal attributes (e.g., speaking ability and friendliness). Nimmo and Savage (1976) distinguish between political role attributes of candidates (ones relating to their acts and qualifications as public officials) and stylistic role attributes (ones which are not directly political, such as the means by which they convey their capabilities to the voters, as

well as their personal qualities). Greenstein (1965) points to a similar dichotomy in a discussion of what attributes people use in describing a president.

In an analysis of candidate perception, Baxter, Young, and Bittner (1973) asked students to respond to semantic differential scales consisting of credibility and charisma items for four target sources: John Kennedy, George McGovern, Richard Nixon, and "The Presidency of the U.S." All of the four target sources produced five-factor solutions, each with at least six charisma items. For "The Presidency" target source, a separate and distinct charisma factor emerged. This, with the fact that other charisma items loaded on other dimensions which emerged, led the researchers to conclude that non-person specific elements can invoke perceptions of charisma. The data from this study also led the researchers to conclude that political figures are perceived along two basic orientations: personal attraction factors and/or power-strength factors.

Several studies have involved the examination of "ideal" images, at the presidential, senatorial, congressional, and gubernatorial levels. Tannenbaum, Greenberg, and Silverman (1977) asked respondents to indicate their conceptualization of the ideal president, to examine it against their conceptualizations of two presidential candidates, Richard Nixon and John Kennedy. In doing so, they found that on a seven-point semantic differential scale (a seven being the highest evaluation point), the ideal president was located: (1) between six and seven for seven items (wise, fair, experienced, strong, active, deep and calm); (2) between five and six for two items (virile

and colorful); and (3) between four and five for three items (liberal, young, and warm).

Sigel (1966) asked respondents to select three items among a list of ten attributes a president might have. Honesty was ranked as number one (78.4%), number two was intelligence (55.2%), and number three was independence (44.8%). On the basis of these results, she concluded that job-related attributes were more important in finding the ideal president than personal attributes.

In a study associated with the 1972 general election, Nimmo and Savage (1974a) found the image of the ideal president to emphasize public official experience and personal qualities but play down politician and dramatic qualities.

Further support for the belief that voters possess an image of an "ideal candidate" was offered by Nimmo and Savage (1975). Employing multidimensional concepts of "image," the authors wrote that the effects of a candidate's image (stimulus-determined) consisted of four levels: leadership role, partisan role, performance style, and personal style. The three levels of the voters' image of candidate (perceiver-determined) were determined as evaluation, potency, and activity. Comparing the forced and free sorting Q methodologies, the authors determined that "essentially similar factor types emerged regardless of sorting technique" (p. 313). The results yielded a four-factor solution indicating four ideal types of senatorial candidate. Type I, the Liberal Politico, had strong loadings from young subjects with "a tendency toward Democratic-partisanship," and suggested a liberal

Democrat designation (p. 301). Both Type I and Type II, the Dynamic Politico, stress role levels. Type II was labeled a Conservative Ideologue with high loadings from five Republicans, two Democrats, and two independents. Type III, the Stylist, evidenced style dimensions and was not partisan related. Type IV, the Performer, places great emphasis on elements of rhetorical style such as articulateness and persuasiveness.

Miller and Jackson (1976) found that the conceptualization of the "ideal office holder" involved four dimensions: (1) personal image, (2) professional background, (3) party affiliation, and (4) ideology. In gathering their data, the researchers asked their respondents to consider their conceptualizations of the ideal governor in their first study and the ideal congressman in their second study of semantic differential scales. The third dimension, party affiliation, emerged only in the second study.

Hellweg (1979), using seven-point semantic differential credibility and homophily scales, found that the ideal candidate is perceived as being: (1) "extremely" believable, reliable, good, energetic, just, honest, responsible, competent, intelligent; (2) "quite" experienced, bold, poised, sociable, admirable, nice, relaxed, cheerful, intellectual, kind, good-natured, trained, expert; and (3) "slightly" attractive, adventurous, verbal, calm, talkative, extroverted, aggressive. In relationship to the voter, this individual was conceptualized as being: (1) "quite" similar in beliefs; (2) "slightly" similar in goals for the country, political party, political attitudes, cultural background, politician preferences, political beliefs;

and (3) "neutral" in terms of similarity in personality, social class, educational background, and goals in life.

By and large, studies dealing with candidate image have been cast in the assumption that a voter makes a unitary decision in the process of casting his vote, one that reflects a preference for one candidate over another (Nimmo & Savage, 1971, 1976). Studies examining ideal candidate conceptualizations have furthered this view by assuming that an individual conceives an ideal criterion by which to judge actual candidates.

Hellweg and King (1983) challenged this in a study aimed at investigating the comparative evaluation of candidates to determine whether or not voters use candidate specific criteria in the decision-making process prior to casting their ballots. Data were collected for Jimmy Carter and Ronald Reagan in the context of the 1980 general election. Standard discriminant coefficients from the data were shown to provide a different ordering of criteria for the two candidates, their discriminating strengths were found to be unique for each candidate, and the valence of the criteria was often found to be opposite for the candidates, suggesting that, in fact, dissimilar standards are employed in evaluating contenders.

In another study, Hellweg, King, and Williams (1986) examined the criteria used by voters in comparing candidates across election levels. Data were collected for Ronald Reagan and Walter Mondale as presidential candidates in the 1984 general election campaign, George Bush and Geraldine Ferraro as vice presidential candidates, two mayoral candidates, and two local

judicial candidates, all to be on the same ballot. The results of the study suggest that incumbent positioning does make a difference in perceptual criteria formation for candidates (such that the incumbent may set the perceptual agenda for the challenger), that such criteria are idiosyncratic to individual candidates and election contexts, but that accurate predictions can be made of voting behavior once these idiosyncratic criteria are known.

Issues versus Images

Leff and Mohrmann (1974) argued that the major goal of campaign oratory is "ingratiation," a specific stratagem designed to gain the favor and votes of the electorate. The analysis of the content and subsequent effects of these campaign messages has fostered a controversy among social scientists. Labeled as "issues vs. images," the question of what messages produce the desired voter response has been the subject of numerous research efforts in both the political science and communication disciplines. This section of our work, therefore, will be devoted to an explanation of the debate over what messages voters find appealing. This analysis will be couched in a comparison of the competing paradigms of campaigning: (1) the rational campaign model, which has brought about research explaining the effects of issue-oriented messages; and (2) the image model, that, as Clark (1979) observed, "[is] geared primarily to images [of the candidates] and only secondarily to discusssion of issues" (p. 123).

The rational campaign model, traceable to ancient Athenian

assemblies, maintains that the electorate must be informed of the salient issues of the campaign, and with this information in hand, will make an informed and logical decision. Clark explained that a campaign becomes "something of a public referendum to determine which candidate best articulates the common concerns of the electorate and best proposes answers to those concerns" (p. 122). This process of campaigning seems especially attractive to the political science discipline because of its congruence with basic democratic theory. Marshall (1983) argued that issues provided an important linkage between the general public and elected officials. This linkage reinforces, at least psychologically, a critically important public attitude. Rationality of decision making, especially in the political realm, is at the apex of voter behavior. Wahl (1959) maintained that in no other area except for religious beliefs "is the average person more convinced of the logical, defensible, and wholly rational nature of his decisions," than when he votes (p. 263).

Encouraged by the supposedly rational nature of voter behavior, certain studies have attempted to document the pervasive effect that issue-oriented messages have upon the electorate. Jackson and Miller (1973) analyzed multiple campaigns at various levels of government held in 1972. The researchers attempted to investigate issue, image, and partisan influence upon these various campaigns. They concluded that though party influence was declining in importance and that image had some effect, the issues advanced in the campaign were the important considerations in voting behavior in the elections

analyzed.

Weisberg and Rusk (1970) and Rusk and Weisberg (1972) found a direct relationship between specific candidate issue stands and voters' inter-candidate perception differences. Garramone (1983) in a study of political advertisement content found that issue-oriented messages were designed in a different manner than image messages. This delineation is a consistent one made in the issue literature. Most of the findings seem to indicate that issue and image concerns are two separate entities. Along this line, she reported that when people observed issue messages, they perceived themselves to be more informed than when watching image messages.

In an analysis of 26 presidential primaries, Gopoian (1980) found that issues were the major focus of the campaign messages. Though certain adjustments were necessary, depending upon the specific location where the message was being delivered, the researcher consistently referred to the salience of issue-orientation in understanding voter behavior.

Certain studies have documented somewhat of a congruence between the two paradigms. In their work on the 1980 presidential election, Kendall and Yum (1984) examined the power of homophily, issues, and images as predictors of voting behavior among a blue-collar population. After examining all three variables, the authors concluded that homophily played the largest role, followed by images and issues. The researchers observed that "blue-collars select their candidates like they pick their friends" (p. 18). The authors also comment negatively

on the issue model:

> Certainly a well educated electorate and careful choices are highly desirable. But there is a hidden elitism in the view that intelligent voting decisions must be based on specific issues, an assumption that any other way of doing it is inadequate and inappropriate.

The study concluded that all the variables are, to a certain degree, linked together in terms of determining voter behavior.

Davis (1981) notes that issues and image seem to meld together as the electorate makes its decision about which candidate to vote for. The subjective nature of decision making by the voter is the key. As Davis argued, "images result from the interaction of candidate messages received by voters and voters' subjective processing of the messages" (p. 413). Consequently, images are formed even if the message appears to be issue-oriented. This phenomenon appears to extend even to the debate forum, thought originally to be the bastion of rational political discussion. Kraus and Smith (1977) and Dennis, Chaffee, and Choe (1979) found significant influence upon candidate perception by utilization of image-oriented information. The significance of this will be evidenced further as the analysis moves to the image model of campaigning.

Much research, predominantly emanating from the communication discipline, has indicated overwhelming support for the notion of candidate image as the key component of most campaign messages. The previously-advanced concept that issues are critical factors in voting behavior encounters serious objections when measured against the breadth of findings reported

in this paper.

Anderson (1973) claimed that campaign oratory revolved around the idea of "characterization." This label referred to "the public and usually verbal expression of self-concept or political evaluation made by a political actor in the public drama" (p. 77). This idea of self-enhancing rhetoric appears consistently in the image literature and seems to be the dominant form of message available to the electorate.

The image construct seems to be demanded by the desires of the public. In sharp contrast to the claims of the rational model, voters do not appear to accept issue-oriented information as easily as they accept the image-based stimulus. Sears (1969) indicated that voters prefer to personalize politics. He argued further that because images are so easy to deal with, the informational basis for decisions (such as issue orientation) is simply discarded. The issues are forgotten in favor of a strategy of what Clark (1979) termed "straightforward ambiguity" (p. 124). This notion is integral to the pervasiveness of the image approach.

As evidenced by the rational approach, voters prefer to think they are being intelligent in their evaluation of candidates. Image orientation enables candidates to deliver messages that appease the wants of the electorate, but also allows the candidate to improve his personal position with the voters. Bennett (1977) provided an exhaustive and articulate taxonomy of the subsumation of issues by the image model:

(a) [issues] are seldom defined to the degree necessary to

debate clear policies or programs that might derive from them, (b) they are generally linked to familiar characterizations of the candidates or the parties rather than to conditions or causes that fall beyond the scope of the election, (c) they are seldom defined in terms that will arouse controversy or that will risk damage to the candidate's public image, (e) they are often linked to claims of the personal qualities of the opponent or to propositions about leadership, and (f) they are usually restricted to a fairly small range of substantive concerns. (pp. 220-221)

Several studies have evidenced the significant role that the image model has played in determining voter behavior. Natchez and Bupp (1968) undertook an analysis of voting patterns in presidential elections from 1952-1964 and found that candidate image was the single best predictor of voter behavior. Reflecting other findings, the authors maintained that images were more easily accepted by the electorate because of the simplicity of cognition on behalf of the individual. Issues need information to support them and usually become "highly fractionated, idiosyncratic and . . . inconsistent" (p. 437).

Party influence has also declined, as reported by Nimmo, Mansfield, and Savage (1974b) and reflected in most of the cited image-oriented literature reported herein.

In his study of the 1976 presidential campaigns, Roberts (1981) argued that the voter decides as to the likability of a specific candidate before adopting any issue stands. This critical stand on the personality of the candidate is fostered by

"feelings of trust or distrust of a candidate, [more] than by attachment to a candidate's party or to a position for which the candidate or party may stand" (p. 70). The decision as to the support of the candidate is usually made before the heavy campaigning period ever begins. Examination of pre-convention messages by Marshall (1983) also indicated a strong image emphasis and acceptance during the early phases of the election. In confirmation with Roberts, this was the time of the campaign when the voter's preference was usually determined.

Turning back to the days of the 18th century and the Earl of Chatham, McGee (1978) provided an interesting perspective on the issue/image controversy. As McGee summarized the trappings of the image model:

> We are asking the impossible when we demand that "the people" make a judgment of "issues" and not "images"; and further, since we try to make "popular sovereignty" at least an ideological reality, it is also impossible for leaders who wish to honor and speak for "the people" to adhere to "issue" criteria. (p. 153)

Indeed, an examination of the issue/image literature appears to indicate a clear preference of the electorate for the image-oriented message. Admittedly, the rational model has its attractive elements, but the pull of the image force is too great to ignore. McGee employed Johnstone accurately when he wrote that

> all critical arguments in philosophy appeal to character and good will seem[s] doubly true in rhetoric; even when we

are convinced that our choice of leaders has been dictated by evaluation of "the issues," we are in fact judging the character and general trustworthiness of those who tell us what "the issues" are (p. 154).

Discussion

The purpose of this paper has been to review political science, sociology, and communication literature dealing with political candidate image, specifically in terms of the components of the construct, ideal image conceptualizations, and the relative efficacy of campaign issues versus candidate image in effecting voting outcomes.

Most of the studies reported dealing with candidate image utilized the 1972 presidential election for analysis, and more specifically Richard Nixon and George McGovern. The majority of these studies employed R and Q factor analytic techniques as a means of processing semantic differential instrument data. In the communication literature, candidate image has been primarily conceptualized as a source valence construct, with credibility scales most often as the instrument of measurement. Both quantitative and qualitative techniques have been incorporated in these studies. Candidate image has been conceptualized as both a stimulus-determined and perceiver-determined phenomenon, with most studies incorporating the latter conceptualization. College students were utilized as subjects in the majority of these investigations, with a few studies involving members of the "general public" through the use of telephone interviewing techniques.

It is clear that images vary across subject populations and context. The research also seems to suggest that there is at least some relationship between perceptions of candidate image and voting behavior. The literature points to some agreement over a dichotomy of candidate perception along the lines of character/competence (leadership), job related attributes, and more stylistic attributes (sociability/extroversion/composure).

However, a number of concerns about candidate image remain unresolved and point to the need for future research. Most of the available research is based on a unitary view of the voter decision-making process, that is, a comparison of one candidate versus another candidate and/or perhaps a comparison against a standard ideal conceptualization. Recent research by Hellweg and King (1983) and Hellweg, King, and Williams (1986) suggests that this process may, in fact, be more complex and that voters utilize candidate specific criteria in making their evaluations. This is an area for further research.

Wakshlag and Edison (1979) have concluded through their research that source valence constructs, such as credibility, attraction, and homophily may operate as part of a latent structure which becomes important when politicians act as communicators, but not as part of a general evaluation of these sources. Much of the candidate image research is based upon the use of source valence conceptualizations. This is an area for future investigation.

Another intriguing area for research into image perception lies in the area of candidate incumbency. As Trent and Friedenberg (1983) suggest, incumbent and challenger campaigning

styles are quite different, since the incumbent already has name identification, an inherent legitimate holding of the office, the attention of the media and the public, and the symbolic "trappings" that attend the office. On the basis of their findings, Hellweg, King, and Williams (1986) infer that perhaps an incumbent can set the "perceptual agenda" for a campaign, such that a challenger is compelled to follow.

Much of what has been reported in this paper would seem to be influenced, at least somewhat, by context. Few studies have examined candidates over more than one election or have conducted comparative analysis across election levels. As O'Keefe and Sheinkopf (1974) have suggested, in local elections campaign issues may be more crucial since voters may feel more of a direct impact from them than from national elections. Further, because national elections usually have more money, they employ more television coverage than local election campaigns, It may be that national elections are more easily translated into image politics than their local counterparts. This remains as an area for further investigation.

It seems plausible that for some elections image has become "the issue" of the campaign. Examples would include campaigns which have occurred amidst controversy or uncertainty about an office-holder's or candidate's character (e.g., Edward Kennedy), trustworthiness (e.g., Nixon), competence (e.g., Carter), age (e.g., Reagan), personal affairs (e.g., Rockefeller, Eagleton). In contrast, other campaigns have featured a single issue almost higher in the minds of an electorate than the candidates

themselves. An example would be the 1968 presidential campaign where resolution of the Vietnam conflict was the issue, and voting decisions were based primarily on beliefs of which candidate could effect such a resolution.

The O'Keefe and Sheinkopf (1974) study suggests that voters do not become knowledgeable about many issues of a campaign. While this represents only one study, it does lend evidence to the Natchez and Bupp (1968) and Sears (1969) arguments that people prefer to personalize politics and simplify the complexity of issues. McGee (1978) seems to have outlined this argument particularly effectively:

> When potential leaders are pushed by journalists, academics, and opponents to "stick to the issues," to be specific "on the issues," to "refrain from mudslinging," the admonition is to avoid the only "issue" which a voter is competent to judge [McGee emphasis], the general trustworthiness displayed by candidates for office. (p. 153)

Hacker (1984) has pointed to the fact that "political image theories and research are disjointed and limited in explanatory power" (p. 1). Perhaps through continued systematic research, we can ascertain image typologies over various election campaigns which fit particular contexts to make pragmatic recommendations to campaign practitioners and to further develop the literature in this area.

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